

**Catholic Intellectual Tradition**  
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**“Man and Woman Complementarity: The Catholic Inspiration”**

Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM, PhD  
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary  
Denver, Colorado

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Sr. Prudence Allen,  
RSM

*“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen”*

### I. Ancient and Medieval Roots

It is a joy to be with you tonight to consider “The Catholic Inspiration for Complementarity of Woman and Man.”<sup>1</sup> Every time man-woman relations moved out of balance in western thought or practice, someone - a philosopher and/or a theologian- responding to a deep source of Catholic inspiration sought ways to bring the balance back.

What do I mean by “out of balance?” To answer that question I would like to present a simple schema of three types of theory of sex and gender identity. [You may refer to them on the handout sheet]. These theories developed when early Greek philosophers asked fundamental questions about sex and gender identity, and when Plato and Aristotle articulated systematic answers to these questions across four basic areas in philosophy: metaphysics, philosophy of science, philosophy of knowledge, and ethics.

There are two basic principles for any kind of complementarity. The first principle is that each of the two components identified as complementary must have equal dignity and worth. For

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<sup>1</sup> A longer version consisting of three lectures in complement with sacramental theologian Sr. Moira Debono, RSM, STD, were given as the Second Annual Vital Grandin Lectures, Newman Theological College, Edmonton , Alberta, Canada November 7-8, 2003.

short, we can call this the principle of equality. The second principle is that each component of the complementary relation must be significantly different from the other. We can call this the principle of significant difference. The third principle of complementarity, when the theory is applied to personal relations, is that the two components, in our case man and woman, are called into a relation of knowledge and love with one another.<sup>2</sup>

If any one of the fundamental principles is missing, the complementarity disappears. If the principle of significant difference is missing, the complementarity disappears, and we have a unisex theory. In the case of sex and gender identity Platonic arguments provided the first foundation for the unisex theory in the fifth century BC. Socrates proposed in Book V of the *Republic*, that if there are no significant differences in the nature of the male and female, then they should do the same things. For Plato the soul was an immortal sexless entity that could be reincarnated in either male or female bodies. Plato's soul/ body dualism provided the first philosophical foundation for the unisex position. Interestingly, Plato's schools did have a few female students. Historical records indicate that one of them dressed as a man. This seems to suggest that women who followed the unisex model tended to lose their sexual differentiation from men.

In contrast, when the principle of fundamental equality of man and woman is missing, we have a polarity in which one sex is considered by nature to be superior to the other. Aristotle, drawing upon a science of the opposites, hot and cold, and a logic of contrariety (which claimed that in a pair of contraries one is the privation of the other), concluded that the female is the

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed examples and text supporting these claims see Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750BC-1250AD* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1985/1997).

passive contrary privation of the active male. Aristotle provided the first systematic philosophical argument to defend the position that the male was considered by nature superior to the female. In generation only the male provided fertile seed, and his seed aimed to produce another male resembling the father unless an accident intervened and the child produced was a female and/or resembled the mother.

The rational capacities of women were less well developed than those of men. Therefore, a woman was virtuous by obeying rather than ruling. She was also the inferior friend to the man, and her virtues were limited to the private sphere of activity. The body and soul of the male, united in a composite human identity, was superior to that of the female. We can call Aristotle's position 'traditional gender polarity.' Women were excluded from Aristotelian schools, which suggests that their devaluation in the polarity theory was accompanied by their devaluation as students.

With some minor variations, during the next eight hundred years in the history of philosophy, theories of sex and gender identity battled back and forth between the Platonic unisex position and the Aristotelian polarity position. Typical of this battle would be the defense of unisex theory in Neoplatonist Porphyry and the elements of sex polarity found in the early Jewish philosopher Philo or the Neoplatonist Plotinus.

### **First Moment**

The first moment of Catholic Inspiration towards complementarity surfaced in the fourth to fifth century AD during Augustine's dramatic engagement of Revelation with one logical

consequence of the classical Greek polarity tradition. In *The City of God* Augustine reflects on question of whether the claim that women is naturally inferior to men means that in the Resurrection, where all imperfections are removed, women will be turned into men. Listen to his own words:

There are some who think that in the resurrection all will be men, and that women will lose their sex.... For myself, I think that those others are more sensible who have no doubt that both sexes will remain in the resurrection. In the resurrection, the blemishes of the body will be gone, but the nature of the body will remain. And certainly woman's sex is her nature and no blemish... What our Lord said was that in the resurrection there would be no marriage. He did not say that there would be no women.<sup>3</sup>

In this remarkable passage St. Augustine brings the Catholic Inspiration into the heart of the discussion of the Resurrection: in heaven, men and women will be equal in dignity and worth, they will be significantly different, and they will be in a union of love. Augustine's writings did not consistently defend complementarity, for he suggested a polarity position by arguing that in marriage the wife does not alone represent the image of God as does her husband; and he also suggested a unisex position for the identity of nuns. Four hundred years later, the Neoplatonist Christian, John Scotus Erigena (810-877) promoted the unisex theory for all men and women when he argued that the original Adam was a unisex being, who in the Fall became male and female, and, following out the Neoplatonic logic, at the resurrection will return to a unisex kind of being.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *The City of God* against the Pagans (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1966), XII, 17.

<sup>4</sup> John Scotus Erigena, *Periphyseon* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), #532-540.

## Second Moment

The second moment of Catholic Inspiration came in the eleventh to twelfth centuries within the Benedictine tradition, which opened up new avenues for living relations of complementarity among men and women who began to share libraries and work in close relation with one another in double monasteries. They also focused on the integration of the person through work, study, and prayer. While St. Anselm (1033-1109) provided a model of gender complementarity in his prayer to St. Paul, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), worked closely with her complement male Benedictine monks: she was Abbess over a double monastery, and her secretary was the Monk Volmar. She was the first western thinker to begin to elaborate a consistent philosophy of complementarity using the medieval science of humors and elements to describe four different types of men, four different types of women, and the ways in which these different types of persons interacted with one another in both married and chaste relations.

Aristotle's cosmology had arranged the four elements in a descending order, and had associated the male with the two highest elements of fire and air, and the female with the two lowest elements of water and earth. Hildegard's Catholic Inspiration brought a balance into this polarity theory by arguing that the male was associated with the highest and lowest of the elements, fire and earth, and the female with the two middle elements, air and water. She offered both theological and empirical evidence that while there was a significant difference between male and female, neither sex was superior to the other. Then, offering an original suggestion of fractional complementarity Hildegard argued that these ideal men have "a wisdom that takes its

beautiful self-control from the female element [air], for they are in possession of a sensible understanding.<sup>5</sup>

In her exegesis of Scripture, Hildegard also indicates how man and woman must become the work of each other: "Man and woman are in this way so involved with each other that one of them is the work of the other [opus alterum per alterum]."<sup>6</sup> This calls the two complement components into an integral relation based on knowledge and love.

As we move to the Scholastic period, we discover a reassertion of all the ancient arguments for sex and gender polarity through the infusion of translations of Aristotle's works into the Latin world. Catholic authors discovered Aristotle through Islamic and Jewish sources and then claimed him as their own. While Avicenna promoted a unisex theory, Averroes and Maimonides integrated Aristotelian sex polarity. Neither the Islamic or Jewish tradition allowed women access to education <sup>in</sup> complement with men.

St. Albert the Great (1193-1280), a Dominican natural scientist, based nearly all of his presuppositions about woman and man on Aristotle polarity theory. He added an emphasis on the opposites, dry and moist, to the Aristotelian polarized opposites, hot and cold, to explain woman's biological inferiority to man. Albert also repeated Aristotle's conclusions that the weaker formation of the female body led to her passive role in generation, to a weaker intellect in which her rational powers were without authority over her irrational powers, and he concluded that her appetites tended to move towards evil.

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<sup>5</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Heilkunde (Causae et curae)* (Salzburg: O. Müller Verlag, 1972), p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Book of Divine Works* (Sante Fe: Bear and Co., 1987), Part One, Vision Four: 100, 123.

St. Albert did introduce one important qualification of the Aristotelian theory by making a distinction between particular and universal nature. The Aristotelian view that woman was an 'accidental or deformed man' (*mas occasionatus*) was limited to refer only to a woman's particular nature in which "the active element principally intends to produce the male" and when a female is born, this intention has been thwarted. Universal nature, on the other hand, "intends the female, as that without which the species cannot be saved."<sup>7</sup> Over all, however, St. Albert did much more to promote traditional polarity than he did to move towards complementarity.

### Third Moment

When would the Catholic Inspiration towards complementarity surface again? In several respects Albert's Dominican student Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) tried to move the principle of equality back into the discussion of man-woman relations. While accepting the Aristotelian theory of sex polarity on the level of nature, St. Thomas developed a thorough theological framework for sex complementarity on the level of grace. He argued that two sexes were more perfect than one, in the Resurrection both sexes will be present in their perfection, differentiation, and equality, both sexes are equally capable of infused wisdom, and the perfection of the theological virtues.<sup>8</sup> Thomas argued against Aristotle's claim that the friendship between a man and a woman in marriage was always between unequals by stating that: "there seems to be the greatest friendship between husband and wife, because they are united not only in the act of

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<sup>7</sup> Albert the Great, *Quaestiones super de animalibus* in *Opera Omnia*, ed Bourgnet (Paris: Apud Ludovicum Vives, 1890-1899), Book XV, 2).

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1956), IV, 88,3.

fleshy union,...but also in partnership of the whole range of domestic activity.”<sup>9</sup> He argued further that this was a true friendship of equality in which husband and wife are of one mind and one will.

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Thomas articulated a new theory of generation by saying that God made each human soul commensurate with a particular body. This rejected Aristotle’s logic that the female identity was determined by the body, as an accidental or deformed reception of the male seed by the mother.<sup>10</sup> Aquinas also qualified Augustine’s view that a woman considered alone without her husband was ~~also~~<sup>not</sup> in the image of God, by that the female did reflect ~~the~~<sup>the claim</sup> the image of God alone, but less perfectly than did the male.

Thomas Aquinas was sandwiched between two very strong traditional polarity theorists: his teacher Albert, and his student, Giles of Rome (1243-1316). Giles reasserted even more rigidly than Albert or Thomas that “woman is called an ‘imperfect man,’ a *mas occasionatus*,”<sup>11</sup> and he adds several other polarity conclusions such as: “woman’s advice is of little value, for by nature, she has a defect in reason and understanding because her body is poorly formed...”<sup>12</sup>

Because the corpus of Aristotelian works were directly translated from Greek into Latin and made required reading in the core curriculum at the University of Paris, whose curriculum provided the model for other universities, by the end of the medieval period Aristotelian rationale

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 123, 4-6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 81, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Giles of Rome, in M. Anthony Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), p.183.

<sup>12</sup> Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), translated by Dominique Deslandres, folio 46.

for sex and gender polarity was firmly ensconced all over Europe effecting what I call “**The Aristotelian Revolution in the Concept of Woman.**” Women had no access to these new centers of higher education. The Catholic Inspiration for complementarity, which had begun to emerge in the Benedictine monastic tradition, was crushed and overturned by an increasingly rigid polarity.

At the same time, several widely circulated satires exaggerated even further women’s inferiority to men. Most notable for our purposes is the *Le Roman de la rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*), a four-hundred page satire in poetic verse co-authored by Guillaume de Lorris (c. 1200-1240) and Jean de Meun (1240-1305).<sup>13</sup> Not only is woman derogatorily symbolized by a passive rose waiting to be seduced, but also marriage is derogatorily portrayed as a horrible trap for a man because woman’s irrational passions ensnare and destroy him. Aristotelian arguments were used throughout to instantiate this satirical polarity position.

Concluding our survey of ancient and medieval struggles for a theory of sex and gender identity inspired by the Christian Faith, we come to Dante, whose *Divine Comedy* incorporated many scholastic principles. Yet, in this extraordinary work of imaginary literature, we find in Dante’s vision that a woman is significantly different and equal, if not superior, to man in intelligence and in virtue. Dante’s invoking of Beatrice as his teacher in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* echoes Boethius’s (480-524), previous model of Lady Philosophy, an imaginary female figure in the position of the wise teacher of an emotional and unwise man. This literary

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<sup>13</sup> Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose* (New York: Dutton, 1962).

hint towards a reverse gender polarity theory brings our introductory analysis of medieval views of man-woman relationship to a close.

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## II. Renaissance and Modern Developments

### Fourth Moment

The Fourth Moment of Catholic Inspiration for bringing complementarity back into the public discussion about gender identity came from an Italian born, French educated woman, Christine de Pizan (1344-1430). Christine de Pizan used dialogue through public correspondence to directly confront the devaluation of woman and of marriage found in satires, in what later became known as the “Querelle de la rose” (or argument about the Rose). The significance of this debate can not be overestimated; it is the first time in western history that a woman and several men publicly debated woman's identity and the man-woman relationship. Christine de Pizan, who had been happily married before being widowed with three young children, introduced a wide range of philosophical arguments to confront fallacious reasoning and distorted reports of experience to defend woman and marriage. She did so without turning to a reverse polarity which devalued men.<sup>14</sup>

The first person to earn her living as a writer, Christine de Pizan produced 41 books, working in the Library of the University of Paris with permission of its Rector, Rev. Jean Gerson. Several of her books attempted to bring new hope for a renewal of man-woman relations in marriage and society. She translated Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on Book I of Aristotle's

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<sup>14</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Poems of Cupid, God of Love* in *La Querelle de la rose: Letters and Documents* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 1978), 1. 163-167, p. 43.

Metaphysics and Boccaccio's Concerning Famous Women into French, and used them in her own writing in The City of Ladies and Book of Virtues. In L'Avision-Christine she describes her hope for women's access to the higher education offered by European universities.<sup>15</sup>

Next, Italian Christian humanists, like Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444) began to educate adult women in private homes or small schools of wealthy families, including one Lady Battista. He also wrote a public defense for the education of women.<sup>16</sup> Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) integrated sections from a version of Plato's Republic with Catholic thought in On Wifely Matters: On Marriage. While many elements of traditional polarity are in this text, Barbaro emphasized the highest form of friendship, unity of mind and will, in marriage.<sup>17</sup>

Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), seeking a deep foundation for the integral complementarity of the eastern Greek and western Latin Churches developed a theory of the coincidence of opposites. Through this framework he introduced several elements of a fractional complementarity of masculine and feminine.

*coincidence  
of  
opposites*

Not all Catholics followed the same inspiration, however. Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) sought to reaffirm a gender polarity understanding of the husband-wife relationship in his very popular text, Della famiglia and in his own new satires on woman's identity. Also, others who turned to Greek texts of Plato's Republic and Symposium for purposes of translation or

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<sup>15</sup> Christine de Pizan, Christine's Vision (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), pp., 1-2, pp. 59-60.

<sup>16</sup> Leonardo Bruni, "On the Study of Literature," in Gordon Griffiths, et. al, eds, The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni Selected Texts (Binghamton, NY: Medieval Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987), p. 240.

<sup>17</sup> Francesco Barbaro, Directions for Love and Marriage, (London: John Leigh, 1677), pp. 69-70.

commentary, changed the original intent of Plato's texts to conform more easily with Christian teachings about marriage and sexual orientation. In this transition period, all sorts of different approaches to the equality and dignity of man and woman were beginning to surface.

Albrecht von Eyb (1420-1475), a German cleric of the lower orders, who had studied both Canon and Roman law, wrote a very popular text entitled *A Little Book of Marriage* in which he sought to change civil laws of broader society to protect women and to support the institution of marriage.<sup>18</sup> Von Eyb supported gender complementarity by attempting to change the legal structure of society to better conform to the equal dignity and significant differentiation of men and women in marriage.<sup>19</sup> Occasionally, Eyb's text goes further than simply defending woman's equal dignity with man, and it suggests that in some respects woman might even be superior to man. Here we see gender complementarity beginning to slide into a reverse gender polarity.

Further articulations for a reverse polarity theory are found in a dialogue written by Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466) in complement with Ludovico Foscarini about whether Adam or Eve is at the greater fault for the Fall and its consequences.<sup>20</sup> The dialogue used the *reductio ad absurdum* argument to prove that Eve was less guilty of original sin than was Adam. Nogarola argues that woman can not be both weaker and more to blame than man; if she is more to blame, then she must be greater. Similarly, the Italian widow Laura Cereta (1469-1499) occasionally displays in

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<sup>18</sup> Albrecht von Eyb, *Das Ehebüchlein* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1890), p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466), *De Pari aut Evaë atque Adae Peccato* (Vienna: Fridericum Kilian, 1886).

her extensive correspondence her own disdain for male humanists who either act immorally or argue weakly, but she usually held herself in the balance of an emerging complementarity.

Reverse gender polarity is first systematically defended by the German humanist Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1536). He offered theological arguments based on the chronological order and manner of creation in his text *On the Superiority of Woman over Man*. Since woman was created last, and out of refined bone rather than mud, she must be superior to man. A century later, Lucrezia Marinelli (1571-1653) wrote the first systematic philosophical text which promoted a reverse polarity. She argued consistently throughout against Aristotelian sex polarity in her 300 page text entitled *The Nobility and Excellence of Woman* that a woman's virtues are better than a man's virtues, and a man's vices are worse than a woman's vices.

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), founder of the Florentine Platonic Academy, had accurately translated Plato's dialogues from Greek into Latin. He Christianized Platonic homosexual love into heterosexual love in his commentary on the *Symposium* and introduced a fractional complementarity in his numerology of female and male numbers. His disciple Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), in his *900 Theses* contained a gender neutrality theory. While his motivation was to provide a single line of agreement among different philosophers, Pico followed a unisex perspective by ignoring significant differences between men and women, and implying that gender identity is an irrelevant factor in the search for truth.

New sciences developing in early modern philosophy, using technologies of telescope and microscope began to overturn Aristotelian cosmology and theories of generation. Mother earth was no longer considered the stationary center of the solar system, and women were no

longer seen as totally passive non-contributors of fertile seed to generation. The underpinning for Aristotelian polarity began to fall apart.

René Descartes (1590-1650) offered a completely new foundation for the unisex theory.

In his *Meditations*, after rejecting scholastic metaphysics as a ground for certainty, Descartes concluded: "I am merely a thinking thing... I am really distinct from my body."<sup>21</sup> Instead of the soul/body dualism found in Plato, we now have a mind/body dualism. Soon, many new authors began to defend the unisex position, and most of these authors were Protestant. For example, Maria van Schurman (1607-1678), a Dutch Protestant friend of Descartes, argued in *The Learned Maid* from the form of the rational soul "that maids do actually learn arts and sciences."<sup>22</sup>

François Poullain de la Barre (1647-1723), a Catholic priest and disciple of Descartes, left his faith to become a Calvinist. In a major work entitled *The Equality of Both Sexes* Poullain gave many arguments for the physical, mental, and moral equality of men and women. He stated that while the body had certain sex differences related to reproduction, the spirit, brain and faculties were the same in women and men, and "they were equally capable of the same things."<sup>23</sup> Poullain also argued that prejudice against women's education was simply a custom that should be overturned by appeal to the common nature of reason in all human beings. Reason became a key

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<sup>21</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), Sixth meditation, #78.

<sup>22</sup> Anna Maria von Schurman, *The Learned Maid: Or Whether a Maid may be a Scholar? A Logick Exercise* (London: John Redmayne, 1659), pp. 6-7.

<sup>23</sup> Poullain de la Barre, *The Woman as Good as the Man: Or, the Equality of Both Sexes*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), p. 66.

of hope among Protestants to open the locked door of the custom of sex polarity which blocked women's access to academic education.

Mary Astell (1688-1731), an English Protestant author argued in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* that an institution of higher education for unmarried women be established because "Custom cannot authorize a practice if reason condemns it."<sup>24</sup> Equality of human reason becomes the key to unlock the door to women's access to higher education. In a second text entitled *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, Astell argued that she wanted to raise the level of the female sex "to an equality at most with men."<sup>25</sup> In *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1700), Astell states that the first thing that a man asks about a prospective wife are the utilitarian questions: "What will she bring? Is the first Enquiry: How many acres? Or how much ready Coin?"<sup>26</sup> The wife's position in marriage is likened to enforced servanthood, enslavement, natural subjection, and a state of tyrannous domination, and love is reduced to a passing feeling which leaves women desperate.<sup>27</sup> Marriage itself is seen as an obstacle to women's full development as persons.

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<sup>24</sup> Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), p. 73.

<sup>25</sup> Mary Astell, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex* (New York: Sourcebook Press, 1970), pp. 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Astell, *Some Reflections on Marriage* (London: William Parker, 1730, rpt. New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 20.

<sup>27</sup> Astell, *Some Reflections on Marriage*, appendix by Astell, 107.

## Fifth Moment

At the same that Descartes provided for Protestants an intellectual foundation for the unisex theory by his separation of mind from body, and identification of the self with the unisex mind, the Catholic Inspiration for gender complementarity burst forth in the Counter-Reformation in two historical spiritual developments: complement apostolates of Catholic men and women, and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Working together in relations of complementarity were in the sixteenth century the Spanish Carmelites St. Teresa of Avila (1518-1582) and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591); in seventeenth century France, St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and the foundress of the Daughters of Charity, Louise de Marillac 1591-1660; and the founder of the Salesians St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and the foundress of the Visitation Nuns, St. Jane de Chantel (1572-1641). The Catholic Inspiration for complementarity put down new roots in chaste relations among lay and religious men and women dedicated to the reform of education and society.

Soon Catholic men and women began working together in complement relations for the Counter-Reformation in the New World: The Ursuline Blessed Marie of the Incarnation (1599-1672) came from France to Quebec City in 1639; she founded a school for girls working with Bishop François de Laval (d. 1708) and frequently met with Jesuit missionaries, some of whom became the North American Martyrs. Then in 1642 the lay Catholic Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve co-founded the city of Ville Marie de Montreal with Jeanne Mance, a nurse and St. Marguerite Bourgeois (1630-1700), founder of the Sisters of Notre Dame, a non-cloistered community of educators. She also opened the first free schools in North America, and her community founded Marianopolis, the first college for women in North America. Marianopolis.

This fifth moment of Catholic Inspiration through a lived complementarity of men and women also included parallel development in a new spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which completely rejected Cartesian dualism of mind and body. Jesus revealed His Sacred Heart to the French Visitation nun St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) in 1675, just twenty-five years after the death of René Descartes. The fully integrated, true man and True God, as the source of love and meaning in the world, overturned all value given to the unisex detached mind of the Cartesian tradition. The Jesuit, St. Claude de la Columbière (1641-1690) worked in complement with St. Margaret Mary in the seventeenth century; and the Jesuit community continued to promote this devotion in the modern world. Shortly after the French Revolution, in 1794, Pope Pius VI, promulgated a Bull in support of devotion to the Sacred Heart and against the Jansenists who had devalued the human body as had the Cartesians. In spite of the living examples of man-woman complementarity in the Catholic Counter-Reformation, by the eighteenth century Cartesian foundations for a unisex foundation for equality of men and women were frequently used by political reformers in France. Their arguments moved from the premise of equal minds to equal rights. In 1787 Marie Jean Antoine Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) wrote an extraordinary appeal for the right of women to vote in the new French constitution: "Is it not as sensitive beings, reasonable, having moral ideas, that men have rights? Women must then have absolutely the same and yet never, in any so-called free constitution, have women exercised the right of citizenship."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Marie Jean Antoine Marquis de Condorcet, "Lettres d'un Bourgeois de New-Haven sur l'unité de la législation," in *Recherches Historiques et Politiques* (Paris: A Colle, 1788), pp. 280-81.

Several others called to women to use their reason to overturn customs that supported an inequality. One of the most dramatic was given by Marie Gouze (1748-1793), also known as Olympe de Gouges. She wrote a *Declaration of Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* begging women to create a new world order: "Women, wake up; the tocsin of reason is being heard through the whole universe; discover your rights ... Courageously oppose the force of reason to the empty pretensions of superiority; unite yourself beneath the standards of philosophy..."<sup>29</sup>

In an irony of history both Condorcet and Olympe de Gouges were captured for their broader political beliefs in support of the monarchy. While Condorcet died (or was murdered) in prison, Olympe de Gouges was executed by the guillotine on the Place de la Revolution in 1793. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), a Cartesian feminist, observed in her 1793-94 text *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution and the Effect it has Produced in Europe*: "I tremble, less I should meet some unfortunate being, fleeing from the despotism of licentious freedom, hearing the snap of the guillotine at his heels."<sup>30</sup> Yet, one has to wonder whether this particular instrument, which so effectively severed the head from the body, was a practical consequence of the Cartesian dualistic mentality that had so permeated French thinking of the time.

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<sup>29</sup> Olympe de Gouges, "Les Droits de la Femme" in Darline Gail Levy, et al. *Women in Revolutionary Paris 1789-1795: Selected Documents with Notes and Commentary* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 92.

<sup>30</sup> See also Mary Wollstonecraft, *Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution and the Effect it has Produced in Europe* in *The Wollstonecraft Anthology*, ed. Janet M. Todd (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1977), 132.

Parallel with the unisex drive for equality, other philosophers began to promote a fractionally complementarity. This was not a Catholic inspiration, but rather a subsequent effect of Cartesian influences on the Protestant Reformation. Woman was thought to provide  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the mind's operations, and man the other  $\frac{1}{2}$ , or  $\frac{1}{3}$  with  $\frac{2}{3}$ , or some other fraction that, when added up, produces one mind.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) described women's 'rationality' as focussing primarily on the emotions, on practical decisions in the present, and on the general categories of taste, sentiments, and the senses, while men's minds focussed on ideas and arguments, abstract judgments, and planning for the future. In *Emile* he suggests "Consult the women's opinions in bodily matters, in all that concerns the senses; consult the men in matters of morality and all that concerns the understanding."<sup>31</sup> Rousseau further elaborates his fractional complementarity: "This relation produces a moral person of which the woman is the eye and man the hand, but the two are so dependent upon one another that the man teaches the woman what to see, and she teaches him what to do."<sup>32</sup> Rousseau described marriage as a relation of hedonism and nature. His fractional complementarity contained a hidden traditional polarity:

In the union of the sexes each alike contributes to the common end, but in different ways. From this diversity springs the first difference which may be observed between man and woman in their moral relations. The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive; the one must have both the power and the will; it is enough that the other should offer little resistance./ When this principle [the law of nature] is admitted, it follows that woman is specially made for man's delight.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (London and Melbourne: Dent, 1984), p. 306.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>33</sup> Rousseau, *Emile* (London: Dent, 1984), 322.

Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a systematic critique of Rousseau entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She argued that if women had "a parity of reason" with man then she should have full citizenship: "reason calls for this respect, and loudly demands justice for one half of the human race."<sup>34</sup> Her work emphasized individual rights and the full equality of man and woman, based on the unisex identity of human reason.

In contrast, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), agreed with Rousseau: He argued in his pre-critical work *On the Beautiful and Sublime* that a woman's "philosophy is not to reason, but to sense."<sup>35</sup> In Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" we find him suggesting that "the entire fair sex" does not have the courage to use their reason without direction from others.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Kant reduced marriage to a private contract between husband and wife under a law of domestic society: These persons [husband and wife] "are joined by a *de jure* relationship..."<sup>37</sup> The reduction of marriage to a civil contract had also been previously argued by a French jurist, J.

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<sup>34</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: Norton: 1974), pp. 5-6.

<sup>35</sup> Immanuel Kant, *On the Beautiful and the Sublime*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), Section III "Of the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime in the Interrelations of the Two Sexes," 79.

<sup>36</sup> Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* Appendix to *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1978), p.85.

<sup>37</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice (Part I of The Metaphysics of Morals)* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965), 63. See also the translator's notes where he states that the detailed sections on the laws of domestic society and marital rights are left out of this English translation., 67.

Launoy (1603-1673), to the detriment of the Catholic understanding of its essentially sacramental identity, "leaving spousal morality to the State—the dilemma of Protestant society."<sup>38</sup>

Surprising perhaps is the fact that one of Kant's closest friends, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741-1796), the mayor of Königsburg, On Improving the Status of Women. In this text, he appealed to the now familiar Cartesian unisex reason to defend the equality of men and women against all forms of polarity, even when buried in the fractional complementarity of Rousseau and Kant.<sup>39</sup> Because the French Constitution of 1791 failed to give women equal rights, in the 1792 version of his treatise on marriage, Über die Ehe, von Hippel supported the equality of husband and wife and the full emancipation of woman within marriage.<sup>40</sup> Von Hippel argues: "Had we forgotten already that marriage is an institution of equals, that authority in marriage is distributed equally, and that the man can only claim his wife as his own by means of an *expressed agreement*?"<sup>41</sup> Even with this development in defending the equality of women and men, von Hippel suffered some consequences of Cartesian fractional complementarity when he concluded that: "Man and woman together constitute a complete human being."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Elliott, *What God has joined: The Sacramentality of Marriage* (New York: Alba House, 1990), 107-108.

<sup>39</sup> Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741-1796), *On Improving the Status of Women* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979).

<sup>40</sup> Timothy Sellner, introduction to Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, *On Improving the Status of Women*, 27 and 39. In earlier versions of 1974 and 1975 he had argued against this principle of equality.

<sup>41</sup> von Hippel, *On Improving the Status of Women*, 108.

<sup>42</sup> von Hippel, *On Improving the Status of Women*, 167.

### III. 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges and Principles

Many 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant philosophers continued to promote a hidden polarity within fractional complementarity. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) claimed that women were limited to a childlike exercise of rationality that was tied to the concrete present, while men participated in the full range of rational activity in his essay on women: "As a result of their weaker reasoning power women are as a rule far more affected by what is present, visible and immediately real than they are by abstract ideas, standing maxims, previous decisions or in general by regard for what is far off, in the past or still to come."<sup>43</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Frederick Hegel (1770-1831) continued this trend when he argued that woman was tied to the particular and man to the universal.<sup>44</sup> The existentialist Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) limited women's rational capacities when he located her within the aesthetic and religious spheres of existence, while man had the full range including the ethical sphere.<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche (1844-1900) appeared to argue for a reverse sex polarity when he said that

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<sup>43</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, "On Women," in *Essays and Aphorisms* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 83.

<sup>44</sup> See, G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) especially sections: "the ethical world: law divine and human: man and woman;" and "ethical action: knowledge human and divine: guilt and destiny," 462-500. See also, Soren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 61, 88, 98, 107, 163 and 280; or *Either/Or* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), I: 386, 424, and II: 316, and 319.

<sup>45</sup> See also, Soren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 61, 88, 98, 107, 163 and 280; or *Either/Or* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), I: 386, 424, and II: 316, and 319.

women were superior by virtue of their Dionysian inheritance, but he also promoted a gender polarity when he associated women with slave morality.<sup>46</sup>

John Stuart Mill working with Harriet Taylor in his classic text, *The Subjection of Woman* also defended a fractional complementarity:

With equality of experience and of general faculties, a woman usually sees much more than a man of what is immediately before her. Now this sensibility to the present, is the main quality on which the capacity for practice, as distinguished from theory, depends... Women's thoughts are thus as useful in giving reality to those of thinking men, as men's thoughts in giving width and largeness to those of women.<sup>47</sup>

Mill stated at the outset that “the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself...and it should be replaced by a principle of perfect equality...”<sup>48</sup>; and he introduced the first official bill for women suffrage into the British Parliament. While his fractional complementarity seemed to avoid the usual hidden polarity that we noted in other Protestant authors, his theory did not provide an adequate philosophical anthropology to achieve his goals.

It lacked an adequate metaphysics and anthropology of the essential unity of soul and body.

Before we can consider the blossoming of the next Catholic Inspiration providing a much needed new foundation for Integral Gender Complementarity, we will briefly describe developments in Post Enlightenment philosophies. The unisex position was developed by

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<sup>46</sup> See Sister Prudence Allen, RSM, “Nietzsche’s Tension About Women” in *Lonergan Review* (1993): 42-66 or an earlier version “Nietzsche’s Ambivalence about Women,” in *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory*, eds. Lorenne Clark and Lynda Lange (Toronto: University Press, 1979): 117-133.

<sup>47</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Woman* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 58-9.

<sup>48</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Woman* in *Three Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 427.

Marxists. Karl Marx's, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Frederick Engels', *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1877)<sup>49</sup> sought to abolish private property, which they believed had reduced the wife to a "mere instrument of production" and marriage to a utilitarian system for a "bourgeois" husband.<sup>50</sup> Many Marxist feminists have followed the main lines of Marx and Engel's theory while developing further nuanced positions with respect to woman's identity and political options. Early Marxist feminists focused on the husband-wife relation in marriage and the family. Emma Goldman (1869-1940) argued that the main obstacle to women's full development was the internal tyranny of her own attitudes supported by external tyrants in society; she thought that once these were overcome, then marriage could occur on a new unisex foundation that rejected all dualism between woman and man.

Marlene Dixon, who focused primarily on the working poor, argued for the right to abortion on demand.<sup>51</sup> Maria dalla Costa and Selma James argued that, because family was the main obstacle to women's development, it should be abolished, or at least women ought to earn "wages for housework" for their premarket labor. Saying that pregnancy was like an eighteen-

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<sup>49</sup> Engles argued that "[t]he overthrow of the mother right [over their children] was the *world historical defeat of the female sex*" which resulted in the institution of monogamy so that husbands should pass their private property to their own sons, and women and children became the husband's property. See Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 120.

<sup>50</sup> Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), 47-48.

<sup>51</sup> Marlene Dixon, "We are Not Animals in the Field: A Woman's Right to Choose," in *The Future of Women* (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1980), "Abortion on demand is the right of every woman. If we cannot end an unwanted pregnancy, if we are forced to bear a child against our will, then our right to self-determination has been completely denied to us.", 124. See also "The Right of All Women to Control Their Own Bodies," 207-214.

year prison sentence, they also promoted abortion on demand.<sup>52</sup> The most extreme Marxist feminist argument against generativity was expressed by Shulamith Firestone, who perceived “the tyranny of reproduction and childbearing” itself as the obstacle for women’s full development; she concluded that only when all babies will be gestated in test tubes and laboratories, will women achieve full (unisex) equality with men.<sup>53</sup>

The traditional gender polarity position was rearticulated with new grounds when Sigmund Freud argued that the male anatomy made man naturally superior to woman. Lionel Tiger argued that the male hormone testosterone is superior to the female hormone estrogen. Reverse polarity was defended by Valerie Solanis, who argued that the female xx chromosome makes women superior to men with their xy chromosome; and others have suggested that women’s capacity to give birth makes her superior to men. These contemporary articulations of polarity theories usually select, as Aristotle did before them, one biological aspect of male or female identity, and generalize from its supposed superiority to the identity of the whole person.

More philosophical arguments for the polarity position were given in Simone de Beauvoir’s (1908-1985) classical feminist text, *The Second Sex* (1949), which identified as obstacles to women’s full development: the female body, marriage, ‘feminine nature,’ and man as ‘the other,’ who sought to burn woman into an object. De Beauvoir reveals the rupture in Cartesian dualism of mind and body through a hatred for her own embodied gender identity:

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<sup>52</sup> See Maria Dalla Costa, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, (Bristol, Falling Wall Press, 1973) and Selma James and Giuliana Pompei, *Wages for Housework* (Toronto: Canadian Womens Educational Press, 1974).

<sup>53</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), 225. She argues: “Machines thus could act as the perfect equalizer, obliterating the class system based on exploitation of labor.”, 201.

"Woman has ovaries, a uterus; these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature."<sup>54</sup> In 1970 de Beauvoir signed a 'Manifesto of 343' women stating that she had had an illegal abortion. She began to lead demonstrations in favor of legalizing abortions in France; and argued that "the embryo, as long as it is not yet considered human, as long as it is not a being with human relationships with its mother or its father, it's nothing, one can eliminate the embryo."<sup>55</sup> She states that nothing has an *a priori* identity: "the basis of existentialism is precisely that there is no human nature, and thus no 'feminine nature.' It is not something given."<sup>56</sup> In this situation, man has "proposed to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence."<sup>57</sup>

Even though Simone de Beauvoir, baptized Simone-Ernestine-Lucie-Marie de Beauvoir, devoutly practiced her Catholic faith as a young girl, she progressively moved away from it until she publicly stated that she "detested the Roman Catholic religion."<sup>58</sup> Mary Daly's first book, *The Church and the Second Sex*, recalls approvingly Simone de Beauvoir's rejection of her Catholic faith; Daly calls herself "Post-Christian," and she publicly repudiates her own Catholic Baptism. In Daly's satirical text, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, she argues that women should be only 'woman-identified,' thus rejecting all close relationships with men. This

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<sup>54</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1957), xv.

<sup>55</sup> Simone de Beauvoir in Margaret Simons, "Two Interviews with Simone de Beauvoir (1982), in *Hypatia*, vol.3, no. 3 (winter 1989), 18-19.

<sup>56</sup> Simone de Beauvoir in Margaret Simons, "Two Interviews with Simone de Beauvoir (1982), 19.

<sup>57</sup> De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xxxiv.

<sup>58</sup> De Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, 327.

radical feminist position, a reverse gender polarity that promotes the natural superiority of women over men, leads inevitably to lesbian relations and worship of a female divinity.<sup>59</sup>

Radical feminism in France (1975-2004) views language itself as the battleground for gender theory. One French feminist Manifesto proclaimed this goal: “To destroy the differences between the sexes..., at the same time as we destroy the idea of the generic ‘Woman,’ we also destroy the idea of ‘Man.’”<sup>60</sup> Monique Wittag concluded that “Gender then must be destroyed.”<sup>61</sup> Hélène Cixous summarizes the goal of their attack: “It will be up to man and woman to render obsolete the former relationship and all its consequences, to consider the launching of a brand-new subject, alive, with defamilialization.”<sup>62</sup> Both the unisex and reverse polarity post-Enlightenment developments result in the evaporation of the identities man and woman, as Michael Foucault (1926-1984) suggests, like “a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea.”<sup>63</sup>

20 minutes

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<sup>59</sup> Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 51, 57, 82-84, and 246-253.

<sup>60</sup> “Common Themes,” in *New French Feminisms* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 215.

<sup>61</sup> Monique Wittag, “The Mark of Gender,” *Feminist Issues* (Fall 1985), 6.

<sup>62</sup> Hélène Cixous, “Le rire de la méduse,” in *New French Feminisms*, 261. My emphasis.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 387.

## Sixth Moment

Two students of Edmund Husserl (1859-1958), the founder of the phenomenological movement, laid new foundations for an ontological and experiential complementarity of man and woman. In 1923 Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889-1977), gave a public lecture *On Marriage (Die Ehe)*.<sup>64</sup> Arguing against the “terrible anti-personalism” of the age, von Hildebrand stated that marriage occurs between a man and a woman who are “metaphysically” complementary persons.<sup>65</sup> He continued to explore the nature of the complementary relation, and in 1966 in *Man and Woman: Love and the Meaning of Intimacy* he characterized it as “more in a face-to face position than side-by side” so that “it is precisely the general dissimilarity in the nature of both which enables this deeper penetration into the soul of the other...a real complementary relationship.”<sup>66</sup>

Reacting against the unisex model of gender relation, in 1928 Edith Stein (1891-1942) concluded that: “[t]he Suffragettes erred so far as to deny the singularity of woman altogether;

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<sup>64</sup> Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1991), 53-55.

<sup>65</sup> Von Hildebrand, *Marriage*, 14, 21, and 13-15.

<sup>66</sup> Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Man and Woman: Love and the Meaning of Intimacy* (Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Press, 1966/1992), 91.

thus it could hardly be a question of woman's *intrinsic value* as well.<sup>67</sup> Using the phenomenological method Stein proposed essential characteristics of woman's singular identity:

✓ Her *point of view* embraces the living and personal rather than the objective;... she tends towards wholeness and self-containment in contrast to one-sided specialization;... [with an ability] to become a complete person oneself... whose faculties are developed and coexist in harmony; ... [who] helps others to become complete human beings; and in all contact with other persons, [who] respects the complete human being. ... Woman's intrinsic value can contribute productively to the national community by her activities in the home as well as in professional and public life.<sup>68</sup>

Edith Steins conversion to Catholicism from Judaism in 1922 followed Von Hildebrand's conversion from Evangelical Lutheranism in 1914. Yet, as early as 1914 Stein and Von Hildebrand had both been members of the Philosophical Society, composed of students studying under Husserl and Scheler in Göttingen.<sup>69</sup> By 1930 Edith Stein wrote about her collaboration with von Hildebrand in giving lectures at a conference in Salzburg, Austria.<sup>70</sup>

Stein's philosophy of woman and man turned to a renewed Thomistic metaphysics to definitively reject Cartesian dualism and its effects. She affirmed the unity of the soul/body

<sup>67</sup> Edith Stein, *Essays on Women*, Second Edition, Revised (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1996), Outline of Lecture given to Bavarian Catholic Women Teachers in Ludwigshafen on the Rhine, April 12, 1928. Her italics. The beginning of this passage reads: "In the *beginning of the feminist movement*, it would hardly have been imaginable to consider this theme [The significance of Woman's Intrinsic Value in National life]. At that time, the struggle for "Emancipation" was taking place; i.e., actually the goal aspired to was that of *individualism*: to enable women's personalities to function freely by the opening up of all avenues in education and in the professions." Introduction, 27-28.

<sup>68</sup> Stein, *Essays on Women*, Introduction, 38-39. Her italics.

<sup>69</sup> Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 253-258.

<sup>70</sup> Stein, "Letter to Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, OSB," in *Self Portrait in Letters* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993), 64.

composite, and argued that the soul has priority in gender differentiation: “The insistence that the sexual differences are ‘stipulated by the body alone’ is questionable from various points of view.

1) If anima = forma corporis, then bodily differentiation constitutes an index of differentiation in the spirit. 2) Matter serves form, not the reverse. That strongly suggests that the difference in the psyche is the primary one.<sup>71</sup> Stein also followed von Hildebrand in giving an extensive analysis of love as the “mutual self-giving of persons.”<sup>72</sup>

The Thomistic metaphysical foundation for the ontological unity of the human person was joined by Stein to a phenomenological analysis of uncovered the essence of the “lived experience of the body” in women and in men. In her *Essays on Women* Stein articulated complementary structures of female/male; feminine/masculine; and woman/man related identities. Without going into detail about her complex theory, a brief summary will help situate Stein in these historical moments of Catholic Inspiration.<sup>73</sup>

In female/male complementarity, the female corporeal structure is oriented towards supporting new life within the mother while the male corporeal structure is oriented towards reproducing by detachment of seed as father. This root leads to a different lived experience in which the feminine structure receives the world inwardly more through the passions and the masculine structure, being less affected by the body, receives the world more through the

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<sup>71</sup> Stein, “Letter to Sister Callista Kopf,” in *Self Portrait in Letters*, 99.

<sup>72</sup> See Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2002), 453-459.

<sup>73</sup> See Prudence Allen, “Sex and gender differentiation in Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein,” *Communio* 20 (Summer, 1993): 389-414 and Edith Stein, *Essays on Women* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1996).

intellect. The feminine intellect tends to comprehend the value of an existent in its totality while the masculine intellect tends to judge in a compartmentalized manner; and the feminine will tends to emphasize personal and holistic choices, while the masculine will tends to emphasize exterior specialized choices.

Steins' gender complementarity moves into a fractional mode, although without any of the hidden polarity that was so common to previous theories. At the same time, she argues that in woman/man complementarity, the person can and should integrate the feminine and masculine aspects of the complement gender. This integration protects a woman or a man from the extremes of either gender propensities. She concludes that Jesus Christ is the perfect example of such integration; St. Teresa of Avila is another example. While Edith Stein stands as an important moment of Catholic Inspiration towards Gender Complementarity, her theory at times is weakened by its stereotypical account of masculine and feminine characteristics. Thus, we need one further moment of Catholic Inspiration to achieve the crucial foundation for a contemporary theory of the integral complementarity of man and woman.

*2<sup>nd</sup> minute*

### Seventh Moment

Before her entrance into Carmel, Edith Stein met in the early 1930's at conferences for Catholic philosophers in France, with Jacques Maritain (1892-1973) and Raissa Maritain (1893-1960).<sup>74</sup> Under the leadership of Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain, a personalist review *Esprit* was founded in Paris in 1932. By 1934 Mounier and Maritain were meeting regularly

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<sup>74</sup> Edith Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters 1916-1942* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993), 116-117, 124-125 and 145-146.

together with Gabriel Marcel and Nicholae Berdjaev in a philosophy discussion group. Together they published a "Personalist Manifesto" which contained the first public articulation of a new Catholic personalism. In 1936 Mounier published in *Esprit* the first article focusing on the relation between personalism and woman's identity, entitled "La femme aussi est une personne."<sup>75</sup> This important article identifies women as fully persons as are men. *woman is also a person.*

The early founders of the personalist movement all chose to marry. Consequently, many of their writings focused on the dynamics of integral complementarity relationship in marriage. In one essay, Mounier argued against utilitarian and secular feminist critiques of marriage: "Man and woman can only find fulfillment in one another, and their union only finds its fulfillment in the child; such is their inherent orientation towards a kind of abundance and overflow, not to an intrinsic and utilitarian end."<sup>76</sup> Arguing against the traditional polarity model, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Alice von Hildebrand emphasized that the fulfilling relationship of man and woman essentially requires that "Partners in marriage must remain independent persons." If this is not present, they continue, "to use Marcel's terminology, instead of having a real *we communion*,... all that is left is an inflated ego, in this case that of the husband. He treats his wife as a possession, as a thing; he no longer treats her as a person."<sup>77</sup>

In 1936 Jacques Maritain wrote a didactic essay on "Love and Friendship" in which he distinguished different kinds of love. "A love of *dilection*... [is] that absolutely unique *friendship*

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<sup>75</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, *Esprit* (June 1936): 292-297.

<sup>76</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1952), 108.

<sup>77</sup> Dietrich and Alice von Hildebrand, *The Art of Living* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1965/1994), 73.

between married people one of whose essential ends is the spiritual companionship between a man and a woman in order that they may help each other fulfill their destiny in this world.”<sup>78</sup> In 1942, Raissa Maritain published her own text *We Have Been Friends Together* also demonstrating the lived integral gender complementarity of this married couple, who had together converted to Catholicism in 1906.

In 1934 Mounier published an article in a Polish review (*Wiadomosci Literackie*) explaining what was happening in France in the personalist movement. *The Personalist Manifesto* was soon translated into Polish and distributed underground in Poland during World War II. After the war was over, in May 1946 Mounier was invited to lecture at Krakow Jagallonian university when Karol Wojtyla was a new seminarian studying there. It is not surprising then that in the summer of 1947, while was studying in Rome and living at the Belgian College, Wojtyla went to France to study the worker-priest movement. John Paul II tells us directly in *Gift and Mystery* that “My formation within the cultural horizon of personalism also gave me a deeper awareness of how each individual is a unique person.”<sup>79</sup>

In 1960 the young priest, Karol Wojtyla published his first major work on ethics in marriage entitled, *Love and Responsibility*. Already new roots for man-woman integral complementarity were being put down. Marriage is describe as having a “distinctive interpersonal structure;” with laws “derived from the principles of the personalistic norm, for only in

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<sup>78</sup> Jacques Maritain, “Love and Friendship: A Marginal Note to the Journal of Raissa”, in *Untrammeled Approaches* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 184. His italics.

<sup>79</sup> John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 94.

this way can the genuinely personal character of a union of two persons be ensured."<sup>80</sup> The personalistic norm states basically that one should always treat another person as an end in the self, and never only as a means.

In *Love and Responsibility* Wojtyla also considers what will become a biological foundation for woman's unique approach to another person, namely that by a woman's ovulation from puberty to menopause she has a monthly rhythm that disposes her to welcome new life, even if she never becomes pregnant. Man has a different biological foundation for his unique identity as a father.<sup>81</sup> It is important to note that for Wojtyla, nature does not determine identity, which must also include acts of will and intelligence. He identifies a challenge for man, to overcome all utilitarian propensities to use a woman for her sensual value to him, and alternately the challenge for woman to overcome all utilitarian propensities to use a man for his sentimental value to her.<sup>82</sup>

Integration, a key element in integral gender complementarity, is introduced: love "aims not only at integration 'within' the person but at integration 'between' persons; ... 'integration' means 'making whole,' ... [and it] relies on the primary elements of the human spirit — freedom and truth."<sup>83</sup> In 1969, Wojtyla provided a metaphysical foundation for integration in his *The Acting Person*, by retrieving the hylomorphism of Thomas Aquinas. He states his intention to

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<sup>80</sup> Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 218-219.

<sup>81</sup> Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 280.

<sup>82</sup> Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 104-114.

<sup>83</sup> Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 116.

"rethink anew the dynamic human reality" this medieval theory contained.<sup>84</sup> Wojtyla argues that "integration complements transcendence and... they thus form a dynamic 'person-action-whole', and that without integration transcendence (i.e., going forth into the world and forming the self by personal acts) remains... suspended...'<sup>85</sup>

With the beginnings of a personalist structure of human relations established, in 1974-1975 Wojtyla presented a theological framework for a genuine communion of persons in two lectures: "The Family as a Community of Persons" and "Parenthood as a Communion of Persons".<sup>86</sup> In these lectures, he joined the mystery of human communities called to grow in likeness of the Divine Communion of Persons, with an integration of the biological and personal dynamics of man and woman in marriage and in the family.

Within the year of being elected Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1978, the previously known Karol Cardinal Wojtyla began to give a series of Wednesday Audiences in which he analyzed man-woman complementarity, as revealed in Genesis. Asserting that God created man and woman equal as human beings and equal as persons, he defended the first principle of integral complementarity. Stating that man and woman are two significantly different ways of being persons in the world, he defended the second principle of integral complementarity.

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<sup>84</sup> Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969), 203.

<sup>85</sup> Wojtyla in *The Acting Person*, 190.

<sup>86</sup> Karol Wojtyla, "The Family as a Community of Persons," and "Parenthood as a Community of Persons," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays* (San Francisco: Peter Lang, 1993), chapters 21-21, 315-342.

Demonstrating how a man and a woman are called by God into a union of love in marriage, he proclaimed the vocational dimension of integral complementarity.<sup>87</sup>

At the same time, Pope John Paul II took a different approach to masculinity and femininity than did his predecessor Edith Stein. He did not then, nor has he ever, suggested that a man may have femininity or a woman masculinity. Instead, he argues that masculinity is a man's way of being and acting in the world, and femininity is woman's way of being and acting in the world: "masculinity and femininity" [are]... "two ways of 'being a body...'"<sup>88</sup> In most other respects, John Paul II follows the insights of Edith Stein about woman's and man's identity. It is likely that he learned Stein's phenomenological approach to complement identity through Roman Ingarden, who was his teacher in Cracow, and who had been a close friend of Edith Stein when they studied together under Edmund Husserl. Stein's approach will be foundational to his later development of a theory of women's genius and new feminism.

The Pope argues that personal consciousness of the lived experience of one's body as a man or a woman means that masculinity and femininity are not equivalent to male and female. Instead, "masculinity and femininity express the dual aspect of man's somatic constitution...and indicate furthermore... the new consciousness of the sense of one's own body. ... Precisely this consciousness... is deeper than his very somatic structure as male and female."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1981), (October 24, November 14, 21, and December 12, 1979), 61-91.

<sup>88</sup> John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman* (November 7, 1979), 62.

<sup>89</sup> John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman* (November 14, 1979), 76.

In his 1981 Encyclical *On Human Work* the Holy Father began to make some distinctions

- o which later are more generally associated with a man's and a woman's genius in relation to the way they work. He identifies 'technology' as the objective sense of work and states that it has been an extraordinarily valuable ally to man's physical and intellectual fields of labor. There is no doubt that these contributions to dominion in the world are primarily the result of men's genius. Next, he identifies 'the working human person' as the subjective sense of work. Work offers the possibility for the enhancement of human dignity through personal fulfilment.<sup>90</sup> John Paul II introduces "The Personalist Argument" saying: "Thus, the principle of the priority of labor over capital is a postulate of the order of social morality."<sup>91</sup> This will turn out to be more closely allayed to the genius of woman through her propensity to pay greater attention to the person, than to efficiency or other utilitarian goals.

In his 1988 Apostolic Letter On the Dignity and Vocation of Women and his 1989 Apostolic Exhortation on St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, John Paul II began to elaborate foundational principles for three kinds of integral complementarity: wife and husband in marriage, mother and father in family, and in vocations to human and spiritual parenthood. His elaborations affirmed principles directly counter to those prevalent in traditional polarity and unisex theories of man-woman relation in marriage, family, and vocations.

Against polarity theories the Holy Father reaffirmed, with emphasis in italics, the principle of equality: "both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree;" and "man is

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<sup>90</sup> John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter On Human Work (Laborem exercens)* (September 14, 1981), #5-6.

<sup>91</sup> John Paul II, *On Human Work*, #15.

*a person, man and woman equally so.*<sup>92</sup> Against unisex theories he elaborated, again with emphasis in italics, the principle of significant differences between man and woman: “the personal resources of femininity are certainly no less than the resources of masculinity: they are merely different” and “on the basis of the principle of the principle of mutually being ‘for’ the other, in interpersonal ‘communion,’ there develops in human itself, in accordance with God’s will, the integration of what is ‘masculine’ and what is ‘feminine.’”<sup>93</sup>

Going deeper into the principle of equality, John Paul II identifies the polarity theory with an effect of original sin, because the rupture between man and woman resulted in a tendency for a man to dominate woman and for a woman to cling to a man out of desire to possess him. Listen to his own words: “This ‘domination’ indicates the disturbance and loss of the stability of that fundamental equality which the man and the woman possess in the ‘unity of the two’: and this is especially to the disadvantage of the woman”<sup>94</sup> Next, he offers a command: “The woman cannot become the ‘object’ of ‘domination’ and ‘male possession.’”<sup>95</sup> He states further that it is the task of every woman and man in succeeding generations to work to overcome this inheritance of original sin, by joining with the redemptive action of Christ, because “in Christ the mutual

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<sup>92</sup> John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women)* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1988), #6.

<sup>93</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #10 and #7.

<sup>94</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #10. His emphasis.

<sup>95</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #10. His emphasis. See also, #18.

opposition between man and woman—which is the inheritance of original sin—is essentially overcome.<sup>96</sup>

Four times John Paul II repeats a specific example, overturning the inheritance of an Aristotelian polarity which had said that a woman ought to obey her husband because of her inferior nature, and a Christian polarity which said that a wife ought to obey her husband as punishment for Eve's sin. What he calls 'The Gospel Innovation' asks wives and husbands to act in "mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ." <sup>97</sup> He repeats: "in the relationship between husband and wife the 'subjection' is not one-sided but mutual;" and to be sure that his readers understand its seriousness, he describes it as a call and an obligation: "the awareness that in marriage there is a mutual 'subjection of the spouses out of reverence for Christ,' and not just that of the wife to the husband, must gradually establish itself in hearts, consciences, behavior and customs" of every generation.<sup>98</sup>

*what is the relation between Christ & man  
this is not  
is one-sided*

Going deeper in support of the principle of significant differentiation against unisex theories of parenthood, John Paul elaborates different ways a woman discovers and fulfills her femininity in motherhood, and a man discovers and fulfills his masculinity in fatherhood. Continuing to build on his earlier philosophical foundations, he states that "motherhood implies from the beginning a special openness to the new person: and this is precisely the woman's

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<sup>96</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #11.

<sup>97</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #24. His emphasis.

<sup>98</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #24.

‘part.’<sup>99</sup> Yet, this aspect of motherhood is not a biological determinism, because “motherhood is linked to the personal structure of the woman and to the personal dimension of the gift.”<sup>100</sup>

Emphasizing the personalistic structure of motherhood, Mary, is described as “truly the Mother of God” because motherhood concerns the whole person, not just the body, nor even just human ‘nature.’<sup>101</sup> Further, “Mary exercises her free will and thus fully shares with her personal and feminine ‘I’ in the event of the Annunciation.”<sup>102</sup> Analogously, St. Joseph’s fatherhood was also a personal act of free will in his decision to adopt, guard, and protect Mary, and Jesus her son. He exercised his fatherhood in this total gift of self.<sup>103</sup> The Holy Father defends the personalistic dimension of “Joseph’s fatherhood [which] is not one that derives from begetting offspring; but neither is it an apparent or merely substitute fatherhood. Rather, it is one that fully shares in authentic human fatherhood and the mission of a father in the family.”<sup>104</sup>

Yet, in integral complementarity, the ways of mothering and fathering are significantly different, even though they are equal in dignity and worth. In a well-known, and controversial passage, John Paul II elaborates a root of their significant difference:

This unique contact with the new human being developing with her [the mother] gives rise to an attitude towards human beings—not only towards her own child,

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<sup>99</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #18.

<sup>100</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #18. His emphasis.

<sup>101</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #4. His emphasis.

<sup>102</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #4.

<sup>103</sup> John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Guardian of the Redeemer* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1989), #4-8.

<sup>104</sup> John Paul II, *Guardian of the Redeemer*, #21.

but every human being—which profoundly marks the woman's personality. It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man—even with all his sharing in parenthood—always remains "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to *learn* his own "fatherhood" from the mother.<sup>105</sup>

These claims are not universal or absolute, for we know too well how women often act against their nature by having abortions and how men often generously welcome and foster the life of children and adults. Yet, there is something deep in this claim that points to a source within a woman's identity, if she chooses to develop it and share it with men close to her, that can be a great service to the Church and to the world.

The Holy Father states that the spiritual motherhood and fatherhood of consecrated women and priests share this analogical nature with physical motherhood and fatherhood in family life. All forms of parenting are exercised in the context in which the forces of evil, encapsulated in the "father of lies," waits to devour the child. The Pope concludes that the vocation of all men and women to fathering and mothering is key to the solution of the culture of death. He calls upon women to tap into this dimension of self through an awareness that "God entrusts the human being to her in a special way,... precisely by reason of their femininity..."[and] always and in every way."<sup>106</sup>

This call is addressed to women in the contemporary context in which "the successes of sciences and technology ... and unilateral progress... [has led] to a gradual loss of sensitivity ... for

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<sup>105</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #18. His emphasis.

<sup>106</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #30.

what is essentially human. ”<sup>107</sup> At this moment, John Paul II introduces a new concept to match his call to release new forms of the genius of women to engage with and humanize the successes of the genius of men: “our time in particular awaits the manifestation of that ‘genius’ which belongs to women, and which can ensure sensitivity for human beings in every circumstance...”<sup>108</sup>

The next augmentation of John Paul II’s Integral Gender Complementarity occurred in 1995 in the context of the Beijing United Nations Fourth World Meeting on Women. In preceding years, he had focused on many principles of Catholic social-political teachings. Thus, it is not surprising that, when he returned to consider the man-woman relationship, he would also include a focus that extended into social-political spheres. In a Letter to Women the Holy Father said that the greater presence of women in society will lead to a humanization of institutions organized “according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity.”<sup>109</sup> He called upon women to be involved in “all areas of education” where “they exhibit a kind of affective, cultural, and spiritual motherhood which has inestimable value for the development of individuals and the future of society.”<sup>110</sup>

The Holy Father said to Gertrude Mongella, the Secretary General of the UN Conference on Women, that woman's genius extends throughout wide areas of society and “that women's

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<sup>107</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #30.

<sup>108</sup> John Paul II, *Muleris dignitatem*, #30.

<sup>109</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Women*, in *The Genius of Women* (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1997), #4.

<sup>110</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Women*, #9.

contribution to the welfare and progress of society is incalculable...[and even more needed] to save society from the deadly virus of degradation and violence which is today witnessing a dramatic increase.<sup>111</sup> He stated further in an Angelus reflection (August 29, 1995), that the greater presence of business women in executive positions in the economy, is "giving it a new human inspiration and removing it from the recurring temptation of dull efficiency marked only by laws of profit."<sup>112</sup> He asked that women's genius be "more fully expressed in the life of society as a whole," and that "the widest possible space [be] open to women in all areas of culture, economics, [and] politics..."<sup>113</sup>

In his *Letter to Women* the significant difference between men and women is identified by Pope John Paul as ontological, rooted in their very being as a human persons: "womanhood and manhood are complementarity not only from the physical and psychological points of view, but also from the ontological".<sup>114</sup> Integral complementarity is emphasized as again standing against both traditional polarity and unisex positions:

In John Paul II, *Holy See's Position Paper for Beijing* he stated that there are four integrated categories of the ontological complementarity of men and women though which it can be analyzed: "Women and men are the illustration of a biological, individual, personal and

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<sup>111</sup> John Paul II, Welcome to Gertrude Mongella (May, 1995), in *Genius of Women*, p. 41, #5.

<sup>112</sup> John Paul II, Address on August 20, 1995, in *Genius of Women*, p. 32, #1.

<sup>113</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Women* #10, in *Genius of Women*, p. 54 and also Address on July 23, 1995), p. 27, #1.

<sup>114</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Women* , p. 52, #7.

spiritual complementarity.<sup>115</sup> This complementarity is always of a man and woman as two concrete human beings in relation and not as fractional parts of a man and a woman who in relation make up only a 'single human being.'

The final new concept introduced by Pope John Paul II in relation to integral gender complementarity is "new feminism" which was described for the first and only time in paragraph #99 of the Encyclical Letter on *The Gospel of Life*. Here new feminism is described as a call and duty of Catholic women. In his words: "it depends on them [women] to promote a "new feminism ..." to transform culture.<sup>116</sup> Since this call several Catholic women and men have explored the meaning of this call to transform culture through a new feminism.<sup>117</sup>

) multi-  
book  
culture  
Christ

This new feminism of Pope John Paul II shares with old feminisms the goal of overcoming "all discrimination, violence and exploitation" of women, but it differs in two respects. First, a negative precept: the method of new feminism should not imitate what the Pope

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<sup>115</sup> John Paul II, *Holy See's Position Paper for Beijing* 1.1. See also Sr. Prudence Allen, "Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion *Communio* 17 (winter 1990): 523-544.

<sup>116</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, March 25, 1995), #99.

<sup>117</sup> In May 1997 Helen Alvaré, who works for the United States Bishop's Conference published an article entitled "The New Feminism" in *Liguorian Magazine* (May 1997) and Mary Ann Glendon, the head of the Vatican Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing wrote an article entitled "The Pope's New Feminism" in *Crisis* (March 1997). Then in May 2001, a major Pontifical University in Rome sponsored an international conference entitled: "Women and Cultures in the Perspective of a New Feminism." The conference was held at the Regina Apostolorum Athenaeum, and included such prominent Catholic participation as Professor Angela Ales Bello, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Lateran University and Alicja Crzeskowiak, President of the Polish Senate. See Zenit.org News Agency, May 23, 2001. See also the first interdisciplinary scholarly work on new feminism, Michele Schumacher, ed., *Women in Christ: Toward a New Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

calls “models of models of male domination” to achieve its goals. Obviously, this precept

✗ harkens back to the call to overcome the effects of original sin in its particular male forms.

Second, the positive precept: the method of new feminism should tap into women’s genius with

✓ its root of being predisposed to pay attention to the person in all circumstances. This precept also  
harkens back to the call to overcome the effects of original sin in its particular female forms.

Then echoing his previous claim that women, who have discovered the root of their  
feminine genius lead men to discover their fatherhood, the Holy Father describes women’s  
unique mission in a world full of utilitarianism and the culture of death: “Women first learn and

✗ then teach others that human relations are authentic if they are open to accepting the other  
person, a person who is recognized and loved because of the dignity which comes from being a  
person, and not from other considerations, such as usefulness, strength, intelligence, beauty or

help.”<sup>118</sup> Further, John Paul II identifies this new feminism as “the fundamental contribution  
which the Church and humanity expect from women,” and he concludes that “it is the

✗ indispensable prerequisite for an authentic cultural change.”<sup>119</sup> With this conclusion, we see that  
this seventh moment of the Catholic Inspiration for Integral Gender Complementarity has moved  
from an intellectual theory derived from revelation of the *communio* in the Holy Trinity to a  
precept for transforming the world in the new evangelization of cooperative and interpenetrating  
work of women and men. Indeed, while man-woman complementarity is the prime model for  
integral complementarity, the Holy Father has drawn many analogies from this model for the  
complementarity of the Eastern and Western Churches, complementarity of different cultures,

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<sup>118</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, #99.

<sup>119</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, #99.

complementarity of faith and reason, complementarity of the three paradigm vocations to  
Sacramental marriage, Holy Orders, and Consecrated life. Like leaven, integral complementarity  
in its various forms builds up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth in likeness to the communion of  
Love among the Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity.

45  
minutes